

NEW SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH

New Salem Baptist Church referred to as “an arm” of Richardson Cove Baptist Church, was organized March 25, 1845 under the leadership of Reverends Redford Gatlin, Richard Ivins, and W. M. Cagle. At the first meeting, 51 people joined the church.

For 16 years, the church held regular services until the outbreaks of the Civil War when they discontinued meeting in 1861. After the war, members resumed meeting. The reorganized church has continued uninterrupted services from that time.

The first meeting place was in an old log schoolhouse located only a short distance from the present church site. It was in that first 1845 meeting that the church was named “New Salem.”

Thirty one pastors have led the church through 116 years: W. M. Cagle, Andrew Connatser, W. N. Smith, H. Layman, G. G. Sims, P. W. Maples, Richard Ivins, J. W. H. Cocker, W. M. Thomas, C. W. Case, L. Branson, Newt Clabough, I. N. Bradley, W. M. McCarter, J. W. Trentham, Holt, George Williams, J. P. Davis, Henry Webb, O. M. Drinnon, Will Weaver, John Fox, Ralph Galyon, Rex Waters, Print Valentine, Wiley Pickens, Melvin Carr, Ellis Adams, James C. Franklin, Andy Ball, J. Roy Stallings, Walter Hill, William Barnes, and Melvin Carr.

New Salem had black members, three slaves named Jack, Charity, and Hannah. After the close of the Civil War, they were quite old and requested to remain with their master, Uncle Jobie Rolen. They lived in his home until death and were buried in Jones Cove.

A new church was completed in 1914 and dedicated the fifth Sunday in May 1914. The building debt was paid with a balance of \$33 left in the treasury. The building blew down during a windstorm in April 1922, but the present building was soon constructed.

In a fifteen-year span, improvements include building a parsonage adjacent to the church, remodeling the sanctuary, installing hardwood floors, and adding new furniture as well as a new piano. The exterior was painted white and a porch added in 1965. Carpet was laid in the Sunday School rooms. All improvements were made possible because faithful members worked hard and sacrificed to make the church comfortable and beautiful.

New Salem has remained a community spiritual center through a Civil War, two World Wars, Korean War, Spanish American War, and Viet Nam War and the church continues to provide a worship place where the message of God goes out to the people.

Pastor, Reverend Gary Kent, 1987.